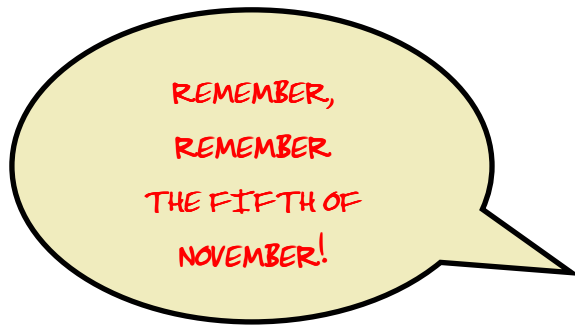


The Celebration of Guy Fawkes Day



About four hundred years ago, in 1605, a man named Guy Fawkes tried to blow up a government building, "The Houses of Parliament". He was hoping to kill the Protestant King James I and all the king's leaders. Guy Fawkes was one of a group of men, who felt that the government was treating Roman Catholics unfairly.

On the 5th of November, the king and his leaders were about to meet. So, Guy Fawkes men placed barrels of gunpowder in one of the cellars beneath the building where the king was having his meeting. Guy Fawkes was to go to light the fuse that would set off the explosion. But the plot was discovered before he had a chance to do this. The king was saved, and Guy Fawkes was hanged. James I declared the 5th November a public holiday in his joy at the overthrow of the Gunpowder Plot.



Ever since, Guy Fawkes Day has been a time for merrymaking. It is a holiday that both children and adults can enjoy. And the fun really begins when darkness falls, then "the Guy" is tossed onto the bonfire, and set alight. Then the fireworks go off, and "the Guy" goes up in flames. Children would often blacken their faces with the ashes on Bonfire night, in imitation of Guy Fawkes who it was believed to have done this also, to try to camouflage himself.

During the reign of James I, children made "the guys" a few days in advance of the event, and paraded the streets with it chanting, "a penny for the guy". This still happens today. As well as burning "the guys" the bonfires were used to cook potatoes. Another sweet which is typically eaten is ginger bread.